

Caring 4 You

The Hard Questions

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I recently read this wonderful little book titled "I'm Dying to Talk with You" by Dave Kampfschulte.

In a light humored way the book tackles the hard questions we all need to answer. We need to have the answers to these questions written down in detail and witnessed by our family, or close friends. Questions such as:

- What would you like your end of life journey to look like (i.e., an Advanced Directive)?
- Is there a written Will, and do your family members know where it's located?
- Do you have a Power of Attorney?
- Does your family know what kind of Memorial Service you would like if any?

So let's back-up here and take things one at a time, because the reality is these can be very tough issues to look at and harder to make happen. Let's start with a Will; my guess is that most people have that one covered, it seems a lot less intrusive and easier to do. They can always be tweaked as circumstances change.

Then we have a Power of Attorney. This can be a little more difficult if you have a large family (who do you pick without causing difficulties with other members of the family). It's an important job and the person you chose is someone you have complete trust in, who you have spent long hours in discussion with, who understands what you would want and would be able to make mindful decisions on your behalf.

Now we come to what can be the hardest decision you have to make, an Advanced Directive, what do we want own end of life care to look like. This is where having a Medical Advocate could be very helpful. This person would make medical decisions for you when you are no longer able. Kampfschulte describes 4 criteria you should consider when making your decision.

1. Someone who could be objective and not let emotions dictate his or her decisions
2. Someone who could make tough decisions under stressful circumstances.
3. Someone who would follow your wishes even though they might not agree with them.
4. Someone who is assertive and will fight for you if needed.

This person should always be able to keep the lines of communication open with all family members to avoid any problems down the road.

It's very important to write down your end of life wishes and it can be a very painful and emotional talk to have with your loved ones. I think we all have thought

about it at one time or another; it's hard but here's the reality, we all know that someday we will die; it's the circle of life and it can't be avoided.

I have some very clear ideas about how I want that to look like but I have yet to do anything about it. According to a Pew Research study 70% of the population has expressed their plans for end of life care but only 30% have actually written it down. What's holding us back? Fear is one reason; we tend to think we have time, and we put it on the back burner. But you know what can happen- it can sneak up on you when you least expect it..

I'd like to mention one last and very important decision that can be made by your family or your Medical Advocate and that is Hospice Care. Hospice was with me when my Father, Mother, and Mother In-law passed away, and I felt so blessed to have them by my side helping to make decisions that were too painful for me, helping me to understand what was going on and being a constant source for love and compassion, not only for me but for my dying family member.

In closing I will just say that we all want to be treated with love and respect in our final days, and the way to make that happen is by letting your wishes be known. Write them down and give a copy to anyone near and dear to you. It really gives you the last word in your very beautiful life.

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